SEEKING THE LORD WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND,
CALLING UPON HIM WHILE HE IS NEAR;
CONSIDERED IN

A

SERMON,

OCCASIONED BY THE

DEATH OF ANN OLDING,

WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE,

DECEMBER 10th, 1775;

In the TWENTY-FOURTH YEAR of her AGE:

PREACHED IN

BUTT-LANE, DEPTFORD,

DECEMBER 17th, 1775;

WITH SOME

ADDITIONS and ANECDOTES relating to her long CONFINEMENT by moſt painful SICKNESS,

AND THE

DIVINE SUPPORTS and CONSOLATIONS with which ſhe was favoured.

BY JOHN OLDING.

THE SECOND EDITION.

They die in JESUS, and are bleſs'd;
How kind their Slumbers are!
From Suff'rings and from Sins releas'd,
And freed from ev'ry Snare.

DR. WATTS.

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W. Musgrave.

BRITISH MUSEUM

To the Church and Congregation of Proteſtant-Diſſenters, who meet for Religious Worſhip in Butt-Lane, Deptford.

My dear Brethren and Friends,

IT is at the Deſire of many of you, and ſome of my Friends in London, that this plain Sermon, or rather the Anecdotes it containeth, relating to my greatly afflicted, but happy Daughter, are preſented to the Publick. If it ſhall pleaſe God to make them ſubſervient to the Converſion, Holineſs and Comfort of any Perſon, His Name will have the Glory, and my Aim will be anſwered.—Your kind and candid Reception of my feeble Attempts to teſtify the Goſpel of the Grace of God among you, I have experienced for almoſt twenty two Years. For any Meaſure of Succeſs which the Lord hath given to my Miniſtry, I deſire to be greatly thankful. I am nothing: God gave the Increaſe: May his Grace enable me better to ſerve him with my Spirit in the Goſpel of his Son; and may that Goſpel be the Power of God unto the Salvation of every one of you. I often rejoice in that Oneneſs of Mind and Judgment reſpecting the great Doctrines of the Goſpel, and that Love and Harmony which are found among

us. O that theſe Doctrines may not be mere Notions in our Heads; but through the Power of the Holy Ghoſt be vital Principles in our Hearts; continually influencing our whole Converſation. May we be perfect, be of good Comfort, be of one Mind, live in Peace, and ſweetly experience that the God of Love and Peace is with us, 2 Corin. xiii. 11. Brethren, I think I can ſay, I love you all in the Lord. *You, my young Friends* particularly, lie near my Heart: I would addreſs you with paternal Tenderneſs, my dear Children, of whom I travail in Birth again until Chriſt be formed in you. (*a*) Let me remind you, that by the Deſire of the Deceaſed, for you the following Diſcourſe was deſigned: May you be concerned to mix Faith with whatever is agreeable to the holy Word of God in it.—Several of you were well acquainted with my Child; were Witneſſes to her Afflictions; the Manner in which ſhe bare them, and the Improvement ſhe was enabled by Grace to make of them. May her happy Death be to you the Means of ſpiritual Life. I hope, my dear Brethren and Friends, that you and I ſhall be excited, and helped to ſtrive together in Prayer to God, that the Word of his Grace may be glorified among us. You will permit me to take this Opportunity of returning you ſincere Thanks for the very *kind and generous* Reſpect you have for ſo many Years ſhewn to your affectionate Brother and Servant in Jeſus Chriſt,

Deptford,
Jan. 18, 1776. JOHN OLDING.

(*a*) Gal. iv. 19.

DIVINE Providence calleth me this Day to a very ſolemn Service; but I will not ſay, that it is in all Reſpects a painful one: For though I cannot but feel ſome tender parental Emotions on the Entrance of Death into my Houſe, and taking away one of my dear Children; yet I know and feel alſo, that I have abundant Cauſe for Thankſgiving and Praiſe to the Father of Mercies. As engaging in this Service, I deſire to have my Eyes to the Lord, to aim at his Glory, and depend upon his gracious Aſſiſtance, while, at the Requeſt of an amiable Child, made to me more than five Years ago, I direct your Attention to a Portion of holy Scripture, which ſhe deſired I would attempt to illuſtrate and improve ſoon after her Funeral. You may find it in the Book of the Prophet Iſaiah.

ISAIAH lv. 6. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.*

Do you aſk, what induced her to make Choice of theſe Words for her Funeral-Text? She told me to this Effect—It was her Love to her young Friends and Acquaintance of this Congregation, and her earneſt Deſire of their ſpiritual and eternal Welfare: And I doubt not but this Deſire of her Heart was poured out before the Lord in repeated and fervent Prayers for you. She had a grateful Senſe of the kind Viſits of her young female

Friends to her, and their Watching whole Nights with her; and her Heart's Deſire and Prayer to God for you, and the other young People of this Congregation was, that you might be ſaved. O that this Deſire, theſe Prayers may be anſwered.

LET us take ſome general View of the preceding Verſes, and then more particularly attend to the Text. It is evident in the Context, that the Holy Spirit exhibits that Grace which in everlaſting Covenant-Settlements was treaſured up in Chriſt, which was promiſed in the Promiſe of Chriſt, and which did, doth, and ſhall *reign through Righteouſneſs unto eternal Life, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, Rom. v. 21. The Bleſſings of the Covenant (here ſpoken of in figurative Terms) are exceeding great and precious; they are as *Waters* for their refreſhing and cleanſing Virtue; they are as *Milk* for eaſy and gentle Nouriſhment; they are as *Wine* to revive and make glad the Heart of the convicted, the diſtreſſed, mourning and dying Sinner; they are as *Bread* to ſtrengthen and invigorate Man's Heart; their Worth and Excellence is ineſtimable: But how may they be obtained? They are to be bought. What is the Price of them? Is the Price what the Sinner can come up to? Is he qualified, or rich enough to be a Purchaſer? or is the Price ſuch, as that he can only look and long and—periſh? O, no; he may not only look and long, but take, and that not ſurreptitiouſly, by Theft or Fraud, but with full Warrant and Leave: The Bleſſings are exhibited, and the Price to him that would buy is—*Nothing: He buyeth without Money and without Price:* Believing, he receiveth the Bleſſings as a free Gift; receiving, he loveth the Giver; and from this Faith and Love united, he yieldeth chearful and unreſerved Obedience.

THRICE

THRICE happy the Perſon who experimentally and practically knoweth this Connexion of Goſpel-New-Covenant-Salvation. But when the Sinner hath bought, may he not be robbed, or ſome Way or other loſe what he hath thus obtained? By no Means. The Bleſſings are ſure; they are indeed Mercies, freely beſtowed, and ſuited to the Sinner's Miſeries, but they are *the ſure Mercies of David*, or the Meſſiah, promiſed to him, purchaſed by him, and ſecured in him. To this wonderful Way of Buying, wonderful on the Part of the Vender, and of the Purchaſer, Men are earneſtly invited. Verſes 1. 3. In Verſes 4, 5, ſome of the Characters of the Meſſiah are repreſented, and the Succeſs he ſhould have as a Saviour (among the Gentiles eſpecially) promiſed. In this Connexion, we find the Words of my Text—In ſpeaking to them I ſhall,

I. ENDEAVOUR very briefly to open ſomewhat of their Meaning and Scope.

II. ATTEMPT ſome Improvement, with a particular View to that pious and affectionate Regard, which the dear Deceaſed expreſſed to her young Friends, when ſhe deſired, that this might be her Funeral-Text.

I. ENDEAVOUR very briefly to open ſomewhat of the Meaning and Scope of the Words. Let us then

[1.] OBSERVE the View here given of the ever-bleſſed God with reſpect to ſinful Men, to whom his Goſpel cometh. *He is near unto them. He may be found of them.*

(1.) *He is near unto them*; not merely as to the Ubiquity of his Eſſence, and the Univerſality of his upholding and governing Providence; for in theſe Reſpects, he is not far from any of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our Being. Acts xvii. 27, 28. But he is near *in his Word—in his Law* diſcovering Sin in its

odious Nature, and condemning Power, and leaving the Sinner without Help or Hope. He is near *in his Goſpel*, revealing his Glory in the Perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, as the God of Salvation. He ſhewed his Glory, proclaimed his Name to Moſes, Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, &c. The whole Goſpel is a Comment upon this Name, an Illuſtration of this Glory, diſplaying the Perfections of Jehovah as a Covenant-God in his Acts of Grace towards poor Sinners, in his Works of Grace in them. It proclaims Peace upon Earth, and Good-will towards men. Luke ii. 14. It is a Word, a Miniſtry of Reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Chriſt reconciling the World unto himſelf, not imputing their Treſpaſſes unto them. 2 Corin. v. 18, 19.

God is near to thoſe to whom this Word cometh in the Doctrines, the Promiſes, the Invitations and Expoſtulations of it. He ſendeth it to them as a Word of Peace and Salvation, and treateth with them reſpecting their Guilt and Miſery, and his rich Grace and Mercy. Acts xiii. 26. To you is the Word of this Salvation ſent. Verſe 38. Be it known unto you therefore, Men and Brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the Forgiveneſs of Sins. His Miniſters as preaching this Goſpel, are Ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech by them: They pray Men in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God. 2 Corin. v. 20. And to whom this Word is made effectual, it is not only nigh in their Mouths, as confeſſing it, but in their Hearts, as believing it. Rom. x. 8.

[2.] *He may be found of them*, that is

(1.) They may obtain this Mercy, or thoſe Bleſſings which the Goſpel revealeth and tendereth, let their Sins be ever ſo numerous, ever ſo heinous. No Guilt or Pollu-

tion

tion of their's is any Bar to the Exerciſe of the Mercy of God through Chriſt to them, or the Efficacy of his Grace in them. Matt. xii. 31. All Manner of Sin and Blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto Men. 1 John i. 7. The Blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son (that glorious Perſon, the ever adorable Immanuel) cleanſeth us from all Sin. 1 Corin. vi. 11. ſuch were ſome of you (obſerve the black Liſt in the two preceding Verſes); but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God. Nor can I omit the three Verſes immediately following my Text, Let the Wicked forſake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts: And let him return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon, &c. &c. It is plain from the Spirit of this Text, and the whole Tenor of Scripture, that the Sinner's forſaking Sin, and Converſion to God, is not the Cauſe of divine Forgiveneſs, but the certain and eſſential Effect of it. Thus as God cometh near to Sinners, as the God of Peace through Chriſt, ſo they may and do, as pardoned and reconciled, come nigh to him. Coloſs. i. 21. And you who were ſometime alienated, and Enemies in your Minds by wicked Works, yet now hath he reconciled: Compare chap. xi. 13. having forgiven you all Treſpaſſes.

(2.) THEY may find him, that is, taſte his Love in all the Fruits of it through Chriſt; that Love and Mercy which was from everlaſting, is unchangeable, and endureth forever: Be bleſſed with all ſpiritual Bleſſings in heavenly Things and Places in Chriſt; all flowing from this everlaſting Love, Eph. i. 3, 4. They may have everlaſting Conſolation and good Hope through Grace: they may have the Perception and Senſe of the Love of God in their Hearts; taſte that the Lord is

gracious

gracious, 1 Peter ii. 3. experience his Love ſhed abroad in their Hearts by the Holy Ghoſt, Rom. v. 5. have near Communion with God as their God, in an everlaſting Covenant, in the holy Duties and Ordinances of his Worſhip, publick, private, and ſecret; may find him as their Shield and exceeding great Reward, Gen. xv. 1. their Defence, their Reſt, their Portion forever. Pſalm lxxiii. 25, 26. Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? and there is none upon Earth that I deſire beſides Thee. My Fleſh and my Heart faileth; but God is the ſtrength of my Heart, and my Portion forever. This leadeth me.

[2.] To conſider that Duty which Men owe to God in this View of him, to which they are exhorted.

WHAT is that Duty? It is expreſſed in the Text, ſuitable to the View given in it of the ever-bleſſed God; ſeek ye the Lord; he may be found: Call ye upon Him; he is near. The Duty then to which they are here exhorted, is,

(1.) EARNESTLY to deſire of the Lord an Intereſt in Him as their God.

WHEN Men really and ſpiritually ſee and feel themſelves to be Sinners againſt God, they will earneſtly deſire an Intereſt in his Grace, as the God of Pardons, a God reconciled in and by Jeſus Chriſt. Spritual Deſires ever follow evangelical Convictions: Theſe Deſires will be ſtrong and preſſing, as the Deſires of Hunger and Thirſt, Ver. 1. Ho, every one that *thirſteth*, Matt. v. 6. Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, that Mercy which is exerciſed through the Atonement of Chriſt; that Righteouſneſs which was wrought out by the complete Obedience of Chriſt, and is (as a Garment and Robe,) unto and upon all them that believe, (Rom. iii. 22.) for their Acceptance with God.

God; and after that Holineſs by which they are conformed to God, and made meet for the full Enjoyment of him in Glory.

(2.) Fervently to pray to the Lord for thoſe Bleſſings which they ſee and feel they need, and he hath promiſed to give. Praying to the Lord is undoubtedly intended by ſeeking him, and calling upon him. Spiritual Deſires ever lead to humble and fervent Prayers. He that doth not deſire, cannot truly pray; and he that doth deſire, expects to find the Lord, though not for his Prayers, yet as praying to him. The cleareſt Conviction of Sin, the deepeſt Humiliation for it will not keep the Sinner from the Throne of Grace, but drive, I would rather ſay, draw him to it. The contrite Publican, when moſt abaſed in the View of his own Vileneſs, would yet cry, God be merciful to me a Sinner, Luke xviii. 13. Prayer and Bleſſings have a ſweet Connexion in the Lord's free and gracious Promiſes, Job xxxiii. 26. He ſhall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him, and he ſhall ſee his Face with Joy. Aſk, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and ye ſhall find, knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you. Matt. vii. 7.

(3.) By Faith to receive Chriſt, and promiſed Mercy and Grace in him; to believe and truſt the Lord's Word, his Word of Promiſe as a faithful Word, that never did fail, never can fail.

The Goſpel exhibits Chriſt, and rich free ſuitable Grace for Sinners in him; and the Sinner taketh God at his Word; and believing the Promiſe, and receiving Chriſt in the Promiſe, he ſetteth to his Seal, that God is true; evidenceth in the ſtrongeſt Manner, his Amen, his moſt hearty Aſſent to it. John iii. 33. So that ſeeking and calling upon the Lord, is deſiring and praying with ſome Meaſure, at leaſt, of Divine Faith, giving the

Lord

Lord, the Glory due unto his Name, as the God of Mercy, the God of Truth; and is ever accompanied with, and iſſueth in compleat Salvation. Rom. x. 9. 13. Whoſoever ſhall call upon the Name of the Lord, ſhall be ſaved. This is ſome brief Account of the Duty to which Men are exhorted. But let me obſerve, that what the Lord calleth Sinners unto, he (according to his ſovereign Pleaſure) giveth them an Ability for: His Commands expreſs his Authority, and their Duty; and his Grace hath its Honours in the Obedience of thoſe happy Perſons, who (as Veſſels of Mercy) comply with his Command. This Connexion to a Mind taught by the Word and Spirit of God, appeareth clear and highly delightful. Thus I have endeavoured briefly to open ſomewhat of the Meaning and Scope of the Text. I now come

II. To attempt ſome Improvement, with a particular View to that pious and affectionate Regard, which the dear Deceaſed expreſſed to her young Friends, when ſhe deſired that this might be her Funeral-Text. Learn,

(1.) THAT it is of the laſt Importance to ſinful Men, not to deſpiſe or diſregard the Lord's gracious Calls to them, or delay a preſent Attention to them.

THE Lord *now* is near; *now* may be found, but he will not *always* be ſo. This is plainly intimated in the Text. Seek ye the Lord *while* he may be found; call ye upon Him *while* he is near. You have the Bible in your Hands; the Goſpel of the Grace of God preached to you; the Lord waiting to be gracious; his Miniſters beſeeching you, that you receive not the Grace of God in vain. Behold, now is the accepted Time; behold, now is the Day of Salvation, 2 Corin. vi. 1, 2. Time fleeth away, Eternity is near; if the Day of Grace be not improved, it will ſoon have an End, as to you;

it

it certainly endeth with every unbelieving Sinner, when God taketh away his Soul. "Our Opportunities are "(like our Souls) very precious; but if they are loſt, "they are irrecoverably loſt (*a*)." Wherefore as the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, To-day if ye will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts. Heb. iii. 7, 8. Sinners, "if "you will not hear God call To-day, you will harden "your Hearts To-day; and if you harden them To-day, "God may harden them To-morrow; if you will not "ſet about Repentance To-day, God may juſtly deny "you his Aſſiſtance To-morrow. They that will not hear "Chriſt ſay, come to me, in a Day of Grace, ſhall "hear him ſay, depart from me, in a Day of Judg-"ment (*b*)."

MAY you, my dear young Friends, attend to the gracious Call without delay: Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon Him, while he is near. The preſent Providence tendeth to engage your Regard to this Word of Grace. You well know, that your vigorous Youth, your healthy Conſtitution, your lively Spirits cannot ſecure you, from ſudden or pining Sickneſs, or the Dart of Death. What is your Life? It is even a Vapour that appeareth for a little Time, and then vaniſheth away, James iv. 14. Perhaps ſome of you have been always ſtupid and careleſs about your eternal Intereſt; others of you have had ſome ſerious Impreſſions on your Hearts from the Word of God, but you have ſtifled your Convictions, and continue in your Sins; lament this before the Lord, and hear his Voice addreſſed to each of you, as through the Lips of your departed Friend, ſeek the Lord, &c. Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth, Eccleſ. xii. 1. How ſad will it be, if

(*a*) Maſon's Select Remains, Second Edition, Page 6.

(*b*) Ibid, Page 21.

Sickneſs and Death arreſt you while you are without Chriſt, and without God in the World. O, ſaid my Child, lately (holding up her withered and emaciated Hand, with the other Hand almoſt as much emaciated), what Hands! how awful would it be for me now, to have no God!

(2.) LEARN that they who have ſpiritually and practically attended to the Goſpel-Call, ſhould moſt thankfully acknowledge the free diſtinguiſhing Grace of God to them, and his effectual Grace in them, enabling them ſo to hear as that their Souls live: Such are and ſhall be bleſſed indeed. Pſal. lxxxix. 15. Bleſſed is the People that know the joyful Sound, &c. I doubt not but I am now ſpeaking to many who are thus bleſſed. Remember with deep Humility, that you were not by Nature better diſpoſed than others; no more willing to come to Chriſt than they; but you were drawn ſweetly; made willing in a Day of gracious Power. Pſal. cx. 3. Thy People ſhall be willing in the Day of thy Power. O may your Souls bleſs the Lord, and all that is within you bleſs his holy Name. Pſal. ciii. 1. May you adopt the Apoſtle's Language, Eph. i. 3, 4. Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual Bleſſings in heavenly Places in Chriſt: According as he hath choſen us in Him, before the Foundation of the World, that we ſhould be holy, and without Blame before him in Love. To ſuch Adorations and Praiſes of the ever-bleſſed God you were elected, redeemed and called. Ye are a choſen Generation, a royal Prieſthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar or purchaſed People; that ye ſhould ſhew forth the Praiſes (the Virtues, the glorious Excellencies and Perfections) of Him, who hath called you out of Darkneſs, into his marvellous Light, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Thouſands have been

enlarged

enlarged in the Praiſes of the Lord for this his Grace towards them, and in them; and bleſſed be God, my dear Child, whoſe Death is the Occaſion of this Diſcourſe, gave clear Evidence, that ſhe was in the happy Number.

You know it is not my Practice to make Encomiums on the Dead; but I am perſuaded, you will permit a Parent to ſay ſomething of a Child, whoſe Caſe was really extraordinary; and that not with a View to exalt her Character, but to magnify the Grace of God in Chriſt; which was ſo much glorified in her, and by her. Her Afflictions were uncommon, both as to their Nature and Continuance; but while her Sufferings abounded, her Supports and Conſolations abounded alſo by Chriſt, 2 Corin. i. 5; ſo that ſhe might with great Propriety have adopted the Words of the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxi. 7. I am a Wonder unto many; but Thou are my ſtrong Refuge.

Her Conſtitution was exceeding weak and tender from her Infancy, occaſioned (as I have always apprehended) from her having the Small-pox in a moſt unkindly Manner, when ſhe was about four Months old. From hence ſhe was in the ſucceeding Years of her Life, affected with various Infirmities, particularly ſome of a nervous and paralytical-Kind. Thus Providence called her to bear the Yoke of Affliction in her Youth, Lam. iii. 27. and ſovereign Grace enabled her alſo to take hold of the Lord's Covenant in her Youth, and to take Chriſt's eaſy Yoke upon her. Matt. xi. 29, 30. And her Deſire and Purpoſe was, to confeſs this with her Mouth, to make a ſolemn Profeſſion of her Faith and Obedience in the Houſe of the Lord, *i. e.* to and in a particular Church of Chriſt. Accordingly on the 30th Day of September, 1770, ſhe was propoſed to the full Com-

munion of this Church; but on the Lord's-day following, *viz.* *October* the 7th, ſhe was viſited with that pining and moſt painful ſickneſs, which confined her from that Day, to Lord's-day *December* the 10th, 1775 (exactly five Years, two Months and three Days); when ſhe (I doubt not) ſlept in Jeſus. It was her Deſire (if the Lord pleaſed) to die on the Lord's-day. The Lord was pleaſed to grant her Deſire: She expired about a Quarter before 11 o'Clock in the Forenoon, when the People of God were generally aſſembled for his public Worſhip. She called the Sabbath a Delight, the Holy of the Lord, honourable, Iſa. lviii. 13. and ſhe rejoiced in the lively Hope of entering into that Reſt, that everlaſting Sabbatiſm which remaineth to the People of God, Heb. iv. 9. of which (I am perſuaded) on the Chriſtian-Sabbath, ſhe had been favoured with ſome ſweet Foretaſtes and Pledges. The Circumſtance of her being propoſed to the Church juſt before her Confinement, hath often given me great Pleaſure. I remember, that as I was recommending her to God in Prayer in the Church-meeting following, when (if ſhe had enjoyed uſual Health ſhe would, no doubt, have been admitted into full Communion) I was led to allude to 1 Kings viii. 18. Thou didſt well that it was in thine Heart; and determined, that if I ſhould live to preach from the Words ſhe had deſired, I would read to the Church and Congregation the Account ſhe had written and put into my Hands, of her Experience. Account of her Experience! Perhaps ſome preſent may aſk what is that? Let me give a brief Anſwer. An Account of Experience then, is a Perſon's giving a Relation, either verbally or in writing, of the Impreſſions which the Word of God hath made upon his Heart by the all-powerful Grace of the Holy Spirit, in convincing him of his Sin and Miſery, enlightening his

Mind

Mind in the Knowledge of Chriſt, renewing his Will, and perſuading and enabling him to embrace Jeſus Chriſt revealed and propoſed, or (which I humbly apprehend to intend juſt the ſame) freely offered to him in the Goſpel; and of his being effectually taught by the Influence of this Grace, that denying Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, he ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent World. Titus ii. 11, 12. Some Account of this Kind the Churches of Chriſt, denominated Congregational or Independent, expect from thoſe who deſire full Communion with them; that they may thus have Evidence, that they are ſuch Perſons as the primitive particular Churches in the Days of the Apoſtles, to whom the inſpired Epiſtles were written, were compoſed of (*a*).

Do any object, "But there are ſome admitted into "your Communion, whoſe Principles and Converſation "are not becoming the Goſpel of Chriſt?" I anſwer, we make ſtrict Enquiry into the Principles and Walk of thoſe who propoſe themſelves to our Communion; and if, upon ſuch Inquiry, either appear to be not conſonant to the Word of God, we do not admit them; whatever Pretences they may make to ſpiritual Experience. And if after their Admiſſion, they fall into Principles that ſtrike (as far as we can judge by the Word of God) at the Fundamental Doctrines of Chriſtianity, or into immoral Practices, which was the Caſe as to ſome in the primitive Churches, we have Rules in the Scriptures, how to proceed with them: And I hope the Churches of Chriſt (in ſome Meaſure at leaſt) practice according to theſe Rules. *e. g.* If the Members referred to, continue in-

(*a*) Rom. i. 7. 1 Corin. i. 2. Eph. i. 1. Philip. i. 1. Coloſs. i. 2. & 1 Theſs. i. 1. 3.

corrigble[3]

corrigible, after due repeated Admonition, they are cut off from the Communion of the Church, and caſt out into the World, as utterly unfit for Fellowſhip with any Church of Chriſt, until they give ſatisfactory Evidence of true Repentance.

You are now, I believe, all waiting to hear the Account which the Deceaſed had written to be laid before this Church. I ſhall read it without any Variation from her own Manuſcript.

"AS I have a Deſire to join this Church, if I ſhould be thought a proper Perſon; and as it is neceſſary to give ſome Account of the Dealings of God with my Soul, I think, as well as I can recollect, they have been as follows.

"I WAS about Fifteen, when I heard my Father expounding the Fifty-firſt Pſalm; which was the Beginning of any laſting Conviction; though before I had often been affected under the Word, and trembled for fear of Hell; but as ſoon as Sermon was done, I was as ſtupid as ever. But this Pſalm the Lord was pleaſed to ſet home; I was pricked to the Heart, and was made to cry out with David, Have Mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving Kindneſs, according to the Multitude of thy tender Mercies blot out my Tranſgreſſions. I think I ſhall never forget the Diſtreſs I was in: My Sins appeared as black as Hell. I had forſaken the Lord from my Infancy; neglected Prayer, reading the Scriptures, &c. I now thought there was no Mercy for me. I endeavoured to pray, but could not. I ſearched the Scripture, but found no Comfort. My Sins appeared more and more heinous; Satan ſuggeſting, there was no Mercy for me, ſuch a vile Sinner. Thus I was in great Darkneſs

neſs for ſome Time, believing, I had ſinned the unpardonable Sin. It is impoſſible for Words to expreſs what I endured for two or three Weeks; but bleſſed be God, he did not utterly leave nor forſake me, or ſuffer me to be tempted above what I was able to bear. One Day I had been in great Diſtreſs, I knew not how to pray, or where to fly for Help; when in the Evening a Friend of my Father's, providentially came to our Houſe: His Diſcourſe was very ſeaſonable to me; ſpeaking of the Promiſes, he mentioned thoſe in Ezek. xxxvi. 26. &c. A new Heart alſo will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the ſtony Heart out of your Fleſh, and I will give you an Heart of Fleſh. O! what ſweet Words to one, who was on the Brink of Deſpair! I found my Heart was very hard; that I was filthy and vile, but now I thought, the Lord was able to take away my Heart of Stone, and give me an Heart of Fleſh. And theſe Words came ſweet to me in Iſaiah i. 18. Come now, and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord: Though your Sins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be white as Snow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as Wool. I was greatly comforted: I ſaw there was Mercy in Chriſt for the chiefeſt of Sinners; and I was enabled to cry for that Mercy which I ſaw my Need of. I poured out my Soul to the Lord, and he heard me. Satan was no longer ſuffered to haraſs me: Thoſe blaſphemous Thoughts which I had before, and which were ſuch a great Burden to me, and ſometimes almoſt made me deſpair, now were quite gone: My Soul was ſet at Liberty; the Lord manifeſted himſelf to me, as a God pardoning Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion and Sin. I believed Chriſt died for me, and I was enabled to reſt upon him for

Salvation,

Salvation. I was very comfortable for ſome Time, took great Delight in reading the Bible; I rejoiced at the Return of the Sabbath; my Father's Sermons were greatly bleſſed to me, particularly that from Eph. ii. 1. You hath he quickened who were dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins. I thought every Sermon he preached about that Time, was on my Account; and I hope I was thankful to the Lord, who had directed him to Texts ſo ſuitable to my Caſe (*a*). I never neglected Prayer: I found it was good to draw nigh to the Lord; for he hath ſaid, that he will not deſpiſe the Prayer of the Deſtitute, but will regard their Cry. I deſired to be humbled for every ſin, and that I might have true Repentance. I was afraid of deceiving myſelf with vain Hopes. I begged the Lord to ſearch and try me, and work a real Change in me.

O BLESS the Lord, my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits: He hath given me a good Hope through Grace. I truſt, he hath turned me from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, and hath opened my Eyes, and ſhewn me how vile I am by Nature, as well as Practice. I deſire to ſee more and more, that in me dwelleth no good Thing; that all my Righteouſneſſes are but as filthy Rags. I deſire to bleſs God for Afflictions; I truſt they have been greatly ſanctified: Before I was afflicted I went aſtray; I found my Heart grow dead to ſpiritual Things; but I hope I have ſeen the Rod, and who hath ſent it. I have for many Months paſt had a Deſire to join this Church, to give myſelf to the Lord, taking hold of his Covenant, believing him to be my

(*a*) I knew nothing at that Time of her being particularly concerned about ſpiritual Things.

God;

God; though I have had, and ſtill have at Times many Doubts and Fears. But bleſſed be God he doth not long hide his Face; I have Comfort from the Promiſes, believing that he, that hath begun the good Work, will carry it on. O! may I now come as a poor humble Sinner, looking to the Blood of Chriſt which cleanſeth from all Sin. O! may it be a Means of ſtrengthening my Faith, that I may grow in Grace, and have more of the Lord's Preſence in full Communion with his People.

ANN OLDING."

THUS was the Deceaſed ready to give a Reaſon of the Hope that was in her with Meekneſs and Fear; to ſay with the Pſalmiſt, come and hear all ye that fear God and I will declare what he hath done for my Soul, Pſal. lxvi. 19. But it pleaſed her Heavenly Father, to prevent her doing it publicly, by making her his Priſoner; by great and frequent Pains, and long Confinement, to exerciſe her Faith and Patience, and thereby increaſe her ſpiritual Experience of the Truth, Power and Excellence of the glorious Goſpel applied by the Holy Spirit.

IT was apprehended, ſoon after her firſt Confinement, that ſhe could live but a very little Time; ſhe herſelf thought ſo; and in this View, was not only reſigned, but alſo very comfortable, having a Deſire to depart and be with Chriſt, which, to every Believer, is far better than a Continuance in this World; Philip. i. 23. while yet ſhe felt the Fondneſs of a Creature's Love, ſtrongly to ſtrike her Senſe (*a*). The tender Ties of natural Affection to her near Relatives, were particularly felt. This (as

(*a*) Watt's Hymns, Book II. Hymn xlviii.

ſhe had an early Diſpoſition, to attempt ſomething of plain Rhyme) ſhe expreſſed in the following Lines.

VERSES compoſed by ANN OLDING, in the Night of *December* the 9th, 1770, and written from her Mouth by her eldeſt Siſter, as ſhe was Watching by her.

I.

My Father calls me to his Arms,
And willingly I go;
With Chearfulneſs I bid farewell
To every Thing below.

II.

My tender Parents kind and dear
I bid farewell to you;
Tho' Nature feels, and I can find,
'Tis hard to ſay, Adieu.

III.

For you my Parents love me much,
You hold me near your Heart:
And ſtill I feel that I can love,
And find it hard to part.

IV.

Ye Brothers, Siſters, me you love
And I love you, I feel;
I ſee your tender Paſſions move;
Your Grief you can't conceal.

V.

But do not weep or grieve for me;
You know I muſt go Home;
I was upon a Viſit here,
And now I muſt return.

Fare-

VI.

Farewell thou World with all thy Toys,
Thou long haſt been to me
A World of tranſitory Joys,
Of Sin and Vanity.

VII.

Now I rejoice to leave this World
Of Sorrow, Sin and Pain:
I know I'm waſhed in Jeſus' Blood,
And ſhall a Crown obtain.

VIII.

I'm going to my heavenly Friend,
My Jeſus and my All:
He calls to take me to his Arms,
I will obey the Call. (*a*)

But

(*a*) The following Account, which I have received ſince I preached the Sermon, from a dear and intimate young Friend of the Deceaſed, who viſited her ſoon after her firſt Confinement, and once and again afterwards, evidenceth the Frame of her Mind to be as above repreſented.

SHE intitleth it, Tranſcripts from the Death-bed (ſo ſhe at that Time apprehended it to be) of my Nancy Olding.

October 17th, 1770, I WENT down to Deptford. Nancy hearing I was below, deſired to ſee me directly. I went up, and upon entering, ſaw a Form I ſhall never forget: She lay in the moſt ſweet and compoſed Manner, ſmiling at Death, which ſeemed already to have ſeized the greateſt Part of her, and to have left Nothing but that which it could not deprive her of—a well grounded Hope—a ſtrong Aſſurance—a Faith triumphant; for each of theſe ſhone in her Countenance. She held out her Hand for me to advance—and ſtooping down to kiſs her, ſhe clung round my Neck, crying don't grieve—don't grieve, my Dear Miſs U—, don't grieve; you muſt rejoice, you muſt not mourn when your Friends are happy; you muſt ſing and praiſe, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with me, indeed. I ſaid, Yes, my Dear, I do rejoice on your Account; I only weep

But after ſome Weeks being aſked, if ſhe was more willing to part with her Parents and Brothers and Siſters, ſhe anſwered, yes; but I ſtill *feel*. I am willing to go, or wait till God's time. I was thinking to Day, that my Comforts

on my own. She replied, O! you can never be thankful enough on my Account: I cannot praiſe him enough, and that grieveth me; I am dumb and cannot ſpeak of his Worth, nor his Love whom my Soul loveth. Well, my Dear, you are going where you will praiſe him as you wiſh. Ay, that I am, ſaid ſhe; and that for an Eternity too; that is my Comfort, that there will be no End to my Praiſes, or any Limitation to my Joy. If it was to laſt for a few Years; nay, was it to laſt for a long Term, I ſhould be miſerable even in Heaven: It would be no Heaven to me to think, my Praiſes ſhould have an End; but I ſhall ſpend an Eternity, a never-ceaſing Eternity, in the bliſsful Preſence, in the joyful Praiſes, of my God and Redeemer—and O! how ſhall I have to praiſe him, for I never can tell you; the bleſſed Jeſus hath made himſelf precious to me indeed, and hath favoured me with much of his Preſence in this Illneſs.

I have had almoſt every Promiſe applied and made ſweet to me; Yes, my Dear Miſs U— I have a ſoft Death-bed indeed:—and then ſhe repeated many of the precious Words of Support and Comfort that had made it ſo. O (ſaid I) that my Death-bed may be juſt like this! She replied, O that it may! (Pain only excepted), O that it may! my Dear—with a moſt earneſt Look, and affectionate Squeeze, repeating, O that it may!—I aſk it for you in the Name of the bleſſed Jeſus, for whoſe Sake I know nothing can be denied me; I aſk it, O moſt gracious Father, that this moſt dear Friend may experience juſt ſuch a Death-bed as mine is. Here ſhe almoſt fainted; and when a little recovered, ſaid, but Papa was going to Prayer; perhaps it is the laſt Time we ſhall meet at the Throne below. We all then kneeled down by the Bed, while ſhe, with Hands and Eyes lifted up, joined with Fervour. After this, I ſat down by her, but too much affected to ſpeak. While ſhe reclined her languiſhing Head on my Boſom, I happened to let ſome Tears fall on her Face. Precious Tears, ſhe cried, but O my U—, though precious to me, they are much more ſo to your God, when they flow from the Eye of Humiliation, and the Heart of evangelical Compunction; pre-

cious

Comforts and Reſignation were in anſwer to my Prayers. But I thought again, what are my Prayers? There is no Worthineſs in them; it is all through Chriſt. Being aſked,

cious indeed to God, who condeſcendeth to put them in his Bottle, and heareth all the Groanings of his People.

COMING into the Room one Time, ſhe called out, here Miſs U—, I juſt now opened my Bible here, Zeph. iii. 14, 15. Another Time when I was by her, ſhe took the Bible out of the Bed, and read to me ſeveral Paſſages that had been made very ſweet and encouraging to her. So Nancy (ſaid I) you hugg your Bible to the laſt! Yes, (ſhe replied) and ſhall hugg it 'till I get to Heaven; but when my Journey is over, I ſhall have no Need of a Map—When I reach the Land of Light, I ſhall have no Need of a Lamp. The Night I ſat up with her, when ſhe was in great Agonies of Pain, and fearing the Continuance of it might make her impatient, (ſhe ſaid) but no, for yet a little Time, he that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry, I wait; O Lord, for thy Salvation, and in thy Word do I hope.—She then expreſſed her Fears of Diſſolution (*i. e.* of the Pains of dying for ſhe often ſaid; ſhe had no Fears beyond Death), leſt ſhe ſhould diſhonour God in the moſt trying Hour; then brake out—yet though I walk through the dark Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil, &c. After a pretty ſtrong Convulſion-fit, ſhe again expreſſed a Fear, leſt ſhe ſhould be impatient for Deliverance; when ſhe again brake out with a new Source of Comfort from theſe Words, Jer. xxix. 11. For I know the Thoughts, that I think towards you, ſaith the Lord; Thoughts of Peace, and not of Evil, to give you an expected End.

One Time, on coming into the Room, I could not help remarking to her Siſter M. what a ſweet Smile ſhe had upon her Countenance, and ſaid, ſhe looked juſt like the Picture of Faith. O, ſaid ſhe, I will tell you what I was then thinking of; I was juſt then thinking of the Worms crawling over this poor Body, which will hardly afford them any Food, and it ſeemed to make Nature ſhudder for a Moment; but then I thought of Job, though after my Skin Worms deſtroy this Body, yet in my Fleſh ſhall I ſee God.

Tho' greedy Worms devour my Skin,
And gnaw my waſting Fleſh:
When God ſhall build my Bones again,
He clothes them all afreſh.

ANOTHER

aſked, what was the Foundation of her Hope, ſhe anſwered, only Chriſt's Righteouſneſs; I know that he died for me.

AFTER

ANOTHER Time ſhe ſaid, how dreadful would it have been, had I now been lying in Darkneſs, Doubts, perhaps Deſpair.—Why am not I in weeping and wailing and gnaſhing of Teeth; it muſt have been the Caſe, had not Grace prevented; but inſtead of this, I am without a Doubt, I know whom I have believed, and am perſwaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him, againſt that Day. And what can I render to the Lord for Grace ſo great as this? What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his Mercies to me? I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.

A POOR good Woman calling to ſee her, ſhe ſaid, ah, Mrs. R. you have been a Child of many Afflictions, but you are a Child of God; that is the Mercy, that ſweetens all; for then ſhall all work together for good; they will all be in Mercy—Afflictions are ſome of the choiceſt Mercies the Children of God can deſire. I ſaid, I believe there are more bleſs God for this Kind of Mercies, than for the Want of them. Ah, that there are, ſhe ſaid; I would not be without them; I would not but have been afflicted for all the World; and God is a faithful God too; I have found him ſo, faithful to his Word, faithful to his Promiſes, faithful to his Threatnings, faithful in his Corrections. I know, O Lord, that thy Judgements are right, and that thou in Faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me. I have had, Mrs. R. the Application of almoſt all the Promiſes; and O, they are ſweet indeed when God applieth them! Upon this, the good Woman, expreſſing Surprize at the amazing Manner in which ſhe lay, looked and talked, (for nothing of it can be in Words expreſſed) give God the Glory, give God the Glory, (ſaid ſhe) it is in infinite Mercy to me the vileſt.

ONE Time, when her Siſter J. and I were with her, and the former happened to ſay ſomething moving about parting with her; ſhe ſaid, come, you muſt not talk ſo; I have not loſt my Affections; and indeed ſhe ſhewed ſhe had not; for ſhe immediately fell into a great Agony; turned from us, and held her Handkerchief at her Eyes for ſome Minutes ſobbing—then recovering herſelf, ſaid, now I am better, but do not talk in that Way again, pray do not; the Summons is come, and I muſt go; it is a Mercy my Soul is ſafe; if it was not, I muſt go, and it would be harder parting then—yet

O Miſs

AFTER ſhe had been ſome Months confined, ſhe apprehended, ſhe ſhould know a long Continuance of Sickneſs and Pain. One Morning after I had prayed with her, ſhe told me, ſhe believed ſhe had yet great Sufferings before her. I aſked her, why ſhe thought ſo; She told me, 1 Peter iv. 12. Beloved, think it not ſtrange concerning the fiery Trial, which is to try you, as though ſome ſtrange Thing happened unto you; had been much impreſſed upon her Mind. I did not lay much Streſs upon this at that Time; but have thought of it ſince, when the Iſſue proved, that her Apprehenſions were right; for ſhe had, indeed, a fiery Trial of long Continuance before her: For though ſome Time after this, ſhe was daily taken out of Bed, and ſat up for an Hour or two at a Time, yet this was with Weakneſs and Pain, ſometimes very great Pain; and for the latter Years of her Life, ſhe was confined entirely to her Bed, only once a Week a kind Friend (who had been for more than fifteen Years a Servant in the Family, and who ever ſince hath reſided near us) came to aſſiſt in lifting her out of Bed, and when the Bed was (as ſoon as poſſible) prepared, lifted her in again, where ſhe remained till the Return of the ſame Day in the next Week.

During the greateſt Part of this Time, her left Hand and Arm were paralytical; ſo that ſhe had no Uſe of them. She was affected again and again with ſtrong

O Miſs U. (directing herſelf to me) you do not know what at Times I ſuffer from theſe Affections of mine—Then (as it were recollecting herſelf) ſhe turned away again—but O my dear Jeſus, where is Love to thee?—What am I going ſhortly to reſt in thy Boſom—and can I feel thus at leaving *theſe?* Thou art Father, Brother, and Friend to me. And that is all—ten thouſand Times more than this World can afford; yes, Miſs U. I can reſt the Weight of my precious Soul upon this Jeſus, aud that is ſaying as much as I can ſay---he is the chiefeſt among ten thouſand, and altogether lovely.

Con-

Convulſions; excruciating Pains in her Bowels and Stomach frequently returned, ſo that ſhe was obliged to have Recourſe to a ſtrong Anodyne Draught for ſome temporary Relief; and in this View I have often thanked a God of infinite Goodneſs for the Virtue he had given the Poppy, as the Means of ſome preſent Eaſe to her. This is ſome Sketch of her very afflicted Circumſtances from Year to Year.

Do you inquire what was the Frame of her Mind in theſe Circumſtances? It may with Truth be ſaid, that her Words and Deportment expreſſed remarkable Degrees of Faith, Hope, Patience, and humble Reſignation to the Will of God; ſo that it hath been more than once ſaid in the Family, *that ſhe, who was the immediate Subject of the Affliction, was the moſt patient under it.* She lay looking, waiting, hoping and longing for the Salvation of the Lord in his own Time. I do not mean to inſinuate, that ſhe was perfect in the Exerciſe of Patience, or any Grace. It appeared that ſhe was not, that there remained in her a Body of Sin and Death; but I can uprightly repeat it, that there appeared remarkable Degrees of Faith, &c. in her Words and Deportment; and the Truth of this, thoſe who were moſt with her and obſerved her, can bear Witneſs; and the following plain Verſes alſo evidence, they were dictated by her, as ſhe lay in her Bed after ſeveral Years Confinement, and expreſſed (I doubt not) the genuine Sentiments and Feelings of her Heart.

I.

Lord, thou art good, nor dare I ſay,
What do'ſt thou? or repine;
O let me ſtill ſubmit to thee,
Believing I am thine.

II. Enabled

II.

Enabled by thy Grace I ſay,
Father thy Will be done.
Do what thou wilt with ſinful me,
While waiting for my Home.

III.

My Nature grones and mourns beneath
This lingering Diſeaſe;
Yes, Nature faints, oppreſſed with Grief,
And longs for a Releaſe.

IV.

Sometimes with mournful Voice I cry,
O could I ſoar above!
O had I Wings, I now would fly,
To Jeſus whom I love.

V.

Sometimes I faint beneath the Rod,
And think I am forgot:
But Faith revives, and thou, my God,
Do'ſt grant me ſweet Support.

VI.

Though Faith and Patience long are tried,
The End will ſurely come:
Like Gold I ſhall be purified,
And then received home.

VII.

That bleſſed Moment will appear
When all my Griefs are o're;
I ſhall forget my Sorrows here,
And feel my Pains no more.

VIII.

Then ſhall my Tongue be filled with Praiſe,
And never never ceaſe:
Cloth'd with Chriſt's ſpotleſs Righteouſneſs,
And dwell in perfect Peace.

Do you aſk, how was ſhe employed in theſe Years of Weakneſs, Pain and Confinement? That ſhe was frequently engaged in ſecret Prayer and Meditation, both by Day and Night, we have abundant Reaſon to believe; I ſay, by Night, for ſhe was ordinarily awake ſeveral Hours every Night. By Day her Chamber was a *little* Library; and by her Deſire, ſeveral of the Books were upon or in her Bed, that they might be within her Reach, to take them as ſhe pleaſed. Theſe were her Companions; ſhe converſed much with them, greatly to her Edification and Comfort; and when in the laſt Year of her Life, her Sight was much impaired through frequent Convulſions, ſhe lamented, that now ſhe could not as before, read her Books. The Holy Scriptures were her chief Delights, and next to them her *favorite Books* were Doctor Watts's Hymns; Mr. Brooks's Mute Chriſtian under the Smarting Rod; Mr. Williſon's Afflicted Man's Companion; a Collection of Pſalms and Hymns from various Authors; Bogatzky's Golden Treaſury. (*a*) The two laſt were diſtributed by *a moſt excellent*

(*a*) UPON looking into this Book ſince her Deceaſe, I find ſhe had folded down ſeveral Paſſages very appoſite to her Circumſtances. I ſhall tranſcribe ſome of them, hoping they may be as inſtructive and comfortable to other afflicted Chriſtians as they were to her. Page 7. "For a Believer to receive and know Chriſt as his All, is the only "Means to live truly a Life of Faith; and when he hath done this, "it will not be hard to reſign all other Things. Thou art my All, "O gracious Lord, what then can I want? I deſire no more than to "be put always in Mind of this by the animating Voice of thy "Spirit. Page 21. Watch therefore over that unſteady Heart of "mine, O thou Keeper of Iſrael, that as ſoon as it begins to wander "from thee, I may be alarmed to flee from Sin as from a Serpent. "Give me Grace to look upon every Hour as my laſt; ſo that being "ever wiſely upon my Guard, I may meet thee with Joy when my "Time is run out, when ever it ſhall pleaſe thee to call me hence

"Page

cellent Theophilus, who evidenceth by a Variety of Inſtances, that it is his great Ambition to be *a Fellow-helper to the Truth*. It is moſt probable, the De-

" Page 100. The nearer to Heaven, the higher the Mountains, the " deeper the Valleys, and the ſharper the Conflicts; but be not diſ- " couraged; it is only for the Trial of our Faith. Page 127. Wherein " the Soul ſeems to be weakeſt, and hath the greateſt Struggle with " Nature, ſhe may be the ſtrongeſt through Grace, and come off " with a moſt glorious Crown. Page 132. Were all our Sins and " Afflictions to be prayed away with a few Words, whence thoſe ſad " and repeated Complaints of David? why ſhould God adviſe us to " wait for him and perſevere in Hope? and how could Faith and " Patience be exerciſed? Page 150. When we have prayed, we muſt " remember to wait alſo; for it is not only an expreſs Command, " but very acceptable to the Lord. Page 164. O Lord, the World " is nothing to me but a Wilderneſs, a Place of Tribulation, where " being daily toſſed to and fro, I enjoy no Reſt: But whenever I " lifted up my Heart and looked for Peace in thee by Prayer, thou " haſt always ſpoken comfortable Things to me, and even carried " me ſafe through all outward Diſtreſſes. Page 196. Doth God delay " his Promiſes, and the Enemy raiſe a Suſpicion againſt his Faithful- " neſs? remember that it is ſaid, wait. Thou art ſtill in being, and " ſhalt be a Witneſs to God's Faithfulneſs. Page 213. Many are for " having that firſt which is to be expected at the End: They would " be glad of the Triumph, but will not fight. The waiting for the " Lord ſeems to them too long, but for the moſt glorious Promiſes " we muſt often wait the longeſt.—It is therefore well to be obſerved, " that is ſaid, it ſhall be well with the Righteous, and the End of the " Upright is Peace. When his Faith, Love, and Patience are tried " enough in the Furnace of Afflictions, then the acceptable " Year ſhall come, and the bleſſed Days of Joy will appear. Page 229. " As Sin always beſets us, ſo Chriſt and his Blood muſt always be " our Robe, elſe there is no Peace: The Heart muſt firmly be " centered in Chriſt, and the Center to be fixed upon in the whole " Progreſs of Chriſtianity, is, that we have Forgiveneſs in the Blood " of Chriſt; for if this is revealed in the Soul by God himſelf, " Heaven and Paradiſe ſeem to be opened unto her."—But it would take up too much Room to tranſcribe all the Paſſages ſhe had noted in this very Spiritual Book.

ceaſed would never have ſeen them but through his Hands.

As ſhe was taken off from her former Concern with the Things of this World, her Heart was greatly weaned from them; and it was rather painful and diſpleaſing to hear *much* Converſation about them in her Chamber. It appeared, that ſhe had a deep Senſe of the Reality, Importance and Solemnity of the inviſible World; for ſhe hath expreſſed a Diſlike to be told of the Death of any Perſons who had given no Evidence of their being real Chriſtians; while ſhe was rather pleaſed to hear, that they, concerning whoſe ſpiritual State there was good Hope, had left this World of Sin and Sorrow: And yet ſhe felt her Affections tenderly touched upon hearing of the Death of her pious Friends. One Inſtance of which we have in the following Verſes, which ſhe compoſed and dictated, after ſhe was entirely confined to her Bed, on the Death of one of her young Friends, for whom ſhe had a great Love in the Lord.

On the Death of Miſs E. U. who departed this Life October the 27th, 1774, Æt. 21.

I.

Can I forbear to Drop a Tear?
Can I forbear to mourn?
When ſuch a ſolemn Sound I hear,
The dear Eliza's gone. (*a*)

II.

Her Worth, her Youth could not avail
To keep her here below:
When God commands, her Strength muſt fail,
And ſwiftly ſhe muſt go.

(*a*) I have in this Verſe altered one Word.

III. But

III.

But I rejoice her Soul is gone
To her Redeemer-God;
She knew in whom ſhe had believed,
And reſted on his Word.

IV.

Sweetly ſhe died, rejoicing in
God's all-ſufficient Grace:
And now ſhe's free from Pain and Sin,
And ſees her Saviour's Face.

V.

Death's gloomy Vale ſhe now hath paſs'd;
She's ſinging Zion's Songs:
O when I think what Joys ſhe taſtes,
I do rejoice ſhe's gone.

VI.

The dear Eliza left this World,
Before her dying Friend;
Who long hath waited for her Change,
Expecting to aſcend.

VII.

And now another Friend is gone,
A Friend I dearly loved:
O how I long to reach my Home,
And meet my Friends above.

VIII.

Floria (*a*) is gone—Eliza too;
And I ſhall ſhortly go:
O may I meet above with you
I ſo much loved below.

(*a*) Miſs S. F. another of her dear young Friends, who died (I doubt not) in the Lord, July the 8th, 1768, Æt. 17.

IX. Floria,

IX.

Floria, Eliza here no more;
Their Spirits gone to reſt,
No longer in this World of Woe;
They're number'd with the Bleſs'd.

THUS while ſhe was made to poſſeſs Years of Vanity, as to the outward Man, and ſo many ſucceſſive weariſome Days and Nights were appointed to her, ſhe was enabled humbly to believe, hope and (at Times) to rejoice in the God of her Salvation: And thus continued to the 8th Day of laſt October, when ſhe told her Mother, that recollecting the preceding Evening, that ſhe was juſt entering on the ſixth Year of her painful Confinement, ſhe had earneſtly prayed, that if it was the divine Will, that Year might be her *Jubile Year*; in which (I apprehend) ſhe might have her Thoughts on the 274th Hymn in the Collection before mentioned.

IN the Afternoon of that Day, ſhe was ſeized anew with moſt *violent Pains*, which continued for more than ten Days; only Anodyne Pills were the Means of giving her ſome *temporary* Intermiſſion and Relief. Would you know what the Breathings of her Heart were, when ſhe was upon the Rack? We have a Specimen taken from her Mouth by one of her Siſters, as ſhe ſat weeping by her.——O! come deareſt Lord—I am waiting for thy Salvation; come, O come, O Lord, hear, O Lord help me—comfort—O for the Sake of him who died, of him who lives, hear me—O I faint—I am oppreſſed, O Lord, undertake for me—I caſt myſelf at thy Feet with my Sufferings—O Lord bring my Soul out of this Priſon—Father I flee to Thee; O I Faint—O I am in tormenting Pain; O for one Moment's Eaſe: I can't groan, I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God

God of my Salvation—O Lord, have Mercy upon me—O Lord, ſhall I be aſhamed? ſhall I be confounded? I flee to Thee, I have no Righteouſneſs of my own—O ſend from above—will the Lord always chide—O releaſe me one Way or other—O how long—O Lord, have Mercy upon me, my Stroke is heavier than my Groaning. O my Father, if it be poſſible, let this bitter Cup paſs from me; but not my Will, but thine be done."

Her Pains, after ten or twelve Days, were not ſo violent, but ſhe continued ſtill languiſhing, and was emaciated and weak to a ſurprizing Degree; but her Faith and Patience continued, and theſe with her Love and Comforts, rather increaſed. The Monday before ſhe died, I aſked her, how it was with her? She anſwered, I am greatly ſupported and comforted, and rejoice in the Hope of Glory; but I am reſigned, and willing to wait his (the Lord's) Time. On the Wedneſday ſhe was heard addreſſing herſelf in Prayer to the Lord: Her Mother called me to come and liſten, as ſhe ſpoke low; I could not hear all ſhe ſaid; but only heard her ſay, "I flee to thy Promiſes, thy Covenant,——my Rock, "my Fortreſs, my Redeemer."——As I was ſometime afterwards holding her Hand in mine, taking Notice of her emaciated Arms, and beginning to mention Philip. iii. 21. Who ſhall change our vile Body, &c. She took up the Words from me, repeating them herſelf; and added "*after all this, what a Change?*" On the Thurſday, ſhe deſired once more to ſee all her Brothers and Siſters. They were informed of her Deſire, and came. Something which then paſſed, was taken in Writing. She was in a moſt Heavenly Frame of Mind: Her Words, and the Accent and Countenance with which ſhe uttered them, were exceeding affecting to thoſe who then ſaw and heard her——"Yet a little while (ſaid ſhe), and

he

he that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry.—I am going to him who lived, and died, and hung on the accurſed Tree——to my Father, and my God, and the Rock of my Salvation——to a Crown of Glory that ſhall never, never, never fade away; (waving her Hand as ſhe pronounced the Word *never*, three Times in a moſt affecting Manner) to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.——

" O glorious Hour, O bleſt Abode;
" I ſhall be near and like my God:
" And Fleſh and Sin no more controul,
" The ſacred Pleaſures of the Soul (*a*.)"

This Day, with an Air of peculiar Pleaſure, ſhe repeated a Verſe, of which it ſeems ſhe was exceeding fond, as ſhe had often adopted it as her own, during her Confinement.

" Jeſus, my God, I know his Name;
" His Name is all my Truſt:
" Nor will he put my Soul to ſhame,
" Nor let my Hope be loſt (*b*)."

THIS appropriating Pronoun *my*, applied to God and Chriſt, was ſweetly familiar to her.——" Sweet, ſweet, " ſweet, dear Lord Jeſus——I love, I dearly love you " all; but I am willing to leave you."——To her Siſter, who was weeping, ſhe ſaid, " Don't weep, for I am " going to Him, who lived and died: He died for me." On her being aſked, if Time was not tedious? (to her in her very weak Circumſtances) ſhe anſwered, " No; not " when I have Chriſt with me; he is very, very, very " precious: Sometimes I take Chriſt into my Boſom." Looking upon her poor emaciated Arm, ſhe ſaid, " It is " a redeemed Arm; it was redeemed by him who was

(*a*) Dr. Watts, Pſalm xvii.
(*b*) Watts's Hymns, Book I, Hymn ciii.

ſlain

ſlain for ſuch a vile Creature as I." On a Perſon's ſaying, you was very comfortable in your Soul Yeſterday; ſhe anſwered, " Yes, I met with Jeſus; I met with him who groaned on Calvary for *me, who I thought, was the Chief of Sinners.* My Pains have been at Times very great, but what were they when compared with what Chriſt ſuffered: He drank of the bitter Cup. I would willingly continue yet a little longer, could I do any Good: I earneſtly long to be made a Bleſſing to thoſe around me: I want to honour Chriſt in my laſt Moments." And theſe were virtually her laſt Moments; for in the two remaining Days of her Life, ſhe was not a little Delirious; and yet, amidſt the Wandering and Confuſion of her Thoughts, there was apparently a Savour of the Things of God. I would juſt obſerve, that in this laſt Week of her Life, ſhe repeated with evident Delight, the cclxvii Hymn in the Collection before mentioned; and expreſſed her Gratitude to her Mother and Siſters for the great Tenderneſs and Care, with which they had attended and nurſed her, during all the Time of her Sickneſs; and was much pleaſed when her Mother told her, that ſhe was now willing to part with her. Her Heart appeared to be full of Love to God, and her Relatives; and (ſaid ſhe) I love all the Children of God. *December* the 8th, in a lucid Interval, after ſhe was delirious, ſhe ſaid to me, " My Heart feels, I know not how it feels, (Death had before this ſtruck her Heart); but I am ſupported. I Hope he will never leave me, nor forſake me. I ſhall go to my Father, my God, my Redeemer."

THUS have we taken ſome View of the Deceaſed. Let us glorify God in her. Mark the perfect Man, and behold the Upright, for the End of that Man is Peace, Pſal. xxxvii. 37. At Death he entereth into the

World of eternal Peace and Joy: He ſhall enter into Peace; they ſhall reſt in their Beds; each one walking in his Uprightneſs, Iſaiah lvii. 2. I ſhall now briefly attempt ſome farther Improvement.

1. LEARN that Afflictions, yea, great Afflictions may be the Lot, of the deareſt Children of God.

THERE have been ſome ignorant Perſons, (and ignorant they muſt be indeed of the Holy Scriptures, and the Covenant of Grace in them revealed) who have imagined that uncommon Afflictions, mark a Perſon as an Object of divine vindictive Wrath. Afflictions are indeed the Fruits of Sin; but they come not to the People of God from vindictive Juſtice, but fatherly Love. Chriſt, by his Obedience to the Death, hath redeemed his People from the Curſe of every Affliction. The Lord, in afflicting his People, ſmiteth them with a chaſtiſing Rod, but will never deſtroy them with his vindictive Sword. The ſoreſt Trials are not only conſiſtent with the Love of God, but are Evidences to his Children of it. Rev. iii. 19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten. We have heard of the uncommon complicated Afflictions and Patience of Job, and have ſeen the End of the Lord, what Effect they had in humbling and purging him; and the happy Iſſue which God gave unto his Sufferings. Pſal. xciv. 12. Bleſſed is the Man whom thou chaſteneſt, O Lord, and teacheſt him out of thy Law. The Afflictions of the Saints are deſigned and bleſſed for their Sanctification. Heb. xii. 10.——He for our Profit, that we might be partakers of his Holineſs. All their Troubles ſhall have an End, and make the heavenly-reſt the ſweeter to them. Pſal. xxxiv. 19. Many are the Afflictions of the Righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. "The ſharper and longer my Diſtreſs and Conflicts

"have

" have been, the nearer and ſweeter, I truſt, will alſo " be my Victory and Salvation. The Days of my " Mourning will be ſoon ended ;" ſaid the Deceaſed.

And at another Time, (adopting the Words of a dying Saint, which ſhe had read) " I am going from a " Sea of Trouble, to an Haven of Reſt."

2. Learn that the Judgments of the Lord (the Diſpenſations of his Providence and Grace), are a great Deep, Pſal. xxxvi. 6. a Deep which Creatures can never fathom. Let us then ſubmit and adore. Rom. xi. 33. O the Depth of the Riches, both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his Judgements, and his Ways paſt finding out! may the Children of God in the darkeſt Seaſons, be enabled to act Faith, on his faithful and gracious Word. Pſal. xxv. 10. All the Paths of the Lord are Mercy and Truth, unto ſuch as keep his Covenant, and his Teſtimonies. Rom. viii. 28. And we know, that all Things work together for good, to them that love God, who are the Called according to his Purpoſe.

3. See that, as an early Acceptance of Chriſt and love to him, is from Grace, ſo it is often highly honoured by the Grace of Chriſt, Prov. viii. 17. I love them that love me, and thoſe that ſeek me early ſhall find me. The dear Deceaſed was an Inſtance of the Truth and Grace of Chriſt in theſe Words; ſo encouraging to the Young particularly. She ſought Chriſt early, and had peculiar Tokens of his Love, both in Life and Death. May the Lord enable you, my dear young Friends, to ſee and feel the Sinfulneſs of your Hearts and Lives, as ſhe did (though ſhe was not left to commit the groſſer Iniquities), and to accept of that ſame Jeſus who was ſo precious to her; ſo ſhall your latter End be like her's. Indeed all the Children of God are not fa-

voured with ſuch ſtrong Conſolation as ſhe was; but they ſhall all obtain the Salvation which is in Chriſt Jeſus, with eternal Glory, 2 Tim. ii. 10. they ſhall all experience the Truth and Meaning of the Voice from Heaven, Rev. xiv. 13.—Bleſſed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from hence-forth: Yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their Labours, and their Works do follow them. Amen.

THE Deceaſed, in 1770, choſe two of Doctor Watts's Hymns to be ſung, the one before, the other after her Funeral Sermon. They were ſung according to her Deſire.

Before Sermon, Book 2d, Hymn 49.

I.

Death cannot make our Souls afraid,
If God be with us there:
We may walk through its darkeſt Shade,
And never yield to Fear.

II.

I could renounce my All below,
If my Creator bid;
And run, if I were call'd to go,
And die as Moſes did.

III.

Might I but climb to Piſgah's Top,
And view the promis'd Land;
My Fleſh itſelf would long to drop,
And pray for the Command.

IV.

Claſp'd in my heavenly Father's Arms,
I would forget my Breath;
And loſe my Life among the Charms
Of ſo divine a Death.

After

After Sermon, Book 1. Hymn 6.—With Hallelujah often repeated at the Cloſe.

I.

Great God I own thy Sentence juſt,
And Nature muſt decay;
I yield my Body to the Duſt,
To dwell with Fellow-Clay.

II.

Yet Faith may triumph o'er the Grave,
And trample on the Tombs:
My Jeſus, my Redeemer lives;
My God, my Saviour comes.

III.

The mighty Conqu'ror ſhall appear,
High on a royal Seat;
And Death, the laſt of all his Foes,
Lie vanquiſh'd at his Feet.

IV.

Though greedy Worms devour my Skin,
And gnaw my waſting Fleſh;
When God ſhall build my Bones again,
He clothes them all afreſh.

V.

Then ſhall I ſee thy lovely Face,
With ſtrong immortal Eyes;
And feaſt upon thy unknown Grace,
With Pleaſure and Surprize.

HALLELUJAH, &c. &c.

THE JUBILE. (a.)

I.

Blow ye the Trumpet, blow,
The gladly ſolemn Sound;
Let all the Nations know,
To Earth's remoteſt Bound;
The Year of Jubile is come;
Return ye ranſom'd Sinners home,

II.

Exalt the Son of God,
The all-atoning Lamb;
Redemption in his Blood
To all the World proclaim.
The Year, &c.

III.

Ye who have ſold for nought
Your Heritage above;
Come, take it back unbought,
The Gift of Jeſus' Love.
The Year, &c.

IV.

The Goſpel Trumpet ſounds,
Let all the Nations hear,
And Earth's remoteſt Bounds,
Before the Throne appear.
The Year, &c.

The Hymn referred to Page 33.

I.

And let this feeble Body fail,
And let it faint or die;
My Soul ſhall quit the mournful Vale
And ſoar to Worlds on high.

(a) The Hymn referred to Page 30.

Shall

Shall join the diſembodied Saints,
And find its long-ſought Reſt,
That only Bliſs for which it pants,
In the Redeemer's Breaſt.

II.

In Hope of that immortal Crown
I now the Croſs ſuſtain;
And gladly wander up and down,
And ſmile at Toil and Pain.
I ſuffer on my threeſcore Years,
Till my Deliv'rer come;
And wipe away his Servant's Tears,
And take his Exile home.

III.

O what hath Jeſus bought for me!
Before my raviſh'd Eyes
Rivers of Life divine I ſee,
And Trees of Paradiſe.
I ſee a World of Spirits bright,
Who taſte the Pleaſures there;
They all are rob'd in ſpotleſs white,
And conq'ring Palms they bare.

IV.

O what are all my Sufferings here,
If Lord, thou count me meet
With that enraptur'd Hoſt t'appear,
And worſhip at thy Feet.
Give Joy or Grief, give Eaſe or Pain,
Take Life and Friends away;
But let me find them all again
In that eternal Day.

FINIS.

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